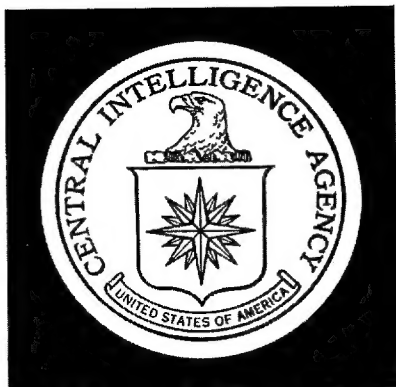
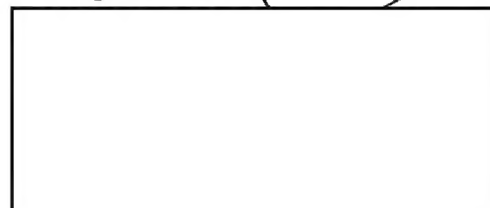


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

Top Secret

111

28 April 1967

25X1



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Approved For Release 2004/11/03 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001900010031-1

25X1

Information as of 1600
28 April 1967

25X1

HIGHLIGHTS

Military activity in South Vietnam on 27-28 April featured unusually heavy Communist artillery fire, including 105-mm. howitzers.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
One of the heaviest Communist barrages of the war against allied positions in northern I Corps on 27-28 April has resulted in more than 200 American casualties (Paras. 1-4). Viet Cong plans for May to July are discussed (Paras. 5-7).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
A number of minority labor organizations plan to hold a labor day parade on 1 May (Para. 1). Thich Tam Chau, the moderate Buddhist leader, reportedly urged Buddhists to participate in the national elections (Para. 2). Another meeting between the GVN and Y B'ham, the dissident tribal leader, has been arranged (Para. 3).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
An F-105 was lost on 28 April attacking the Hanoi railroad repair yard; but other US planes succeeded in downing two MIG-17s (Paras. 1-2).

25X1

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: [redacted]
[redacted] the most recent US air strikes near Hanoi and Haiphong have triggered a renewed flow of refugees to the countryside (Para. 1). The Hanoi press has warned rural

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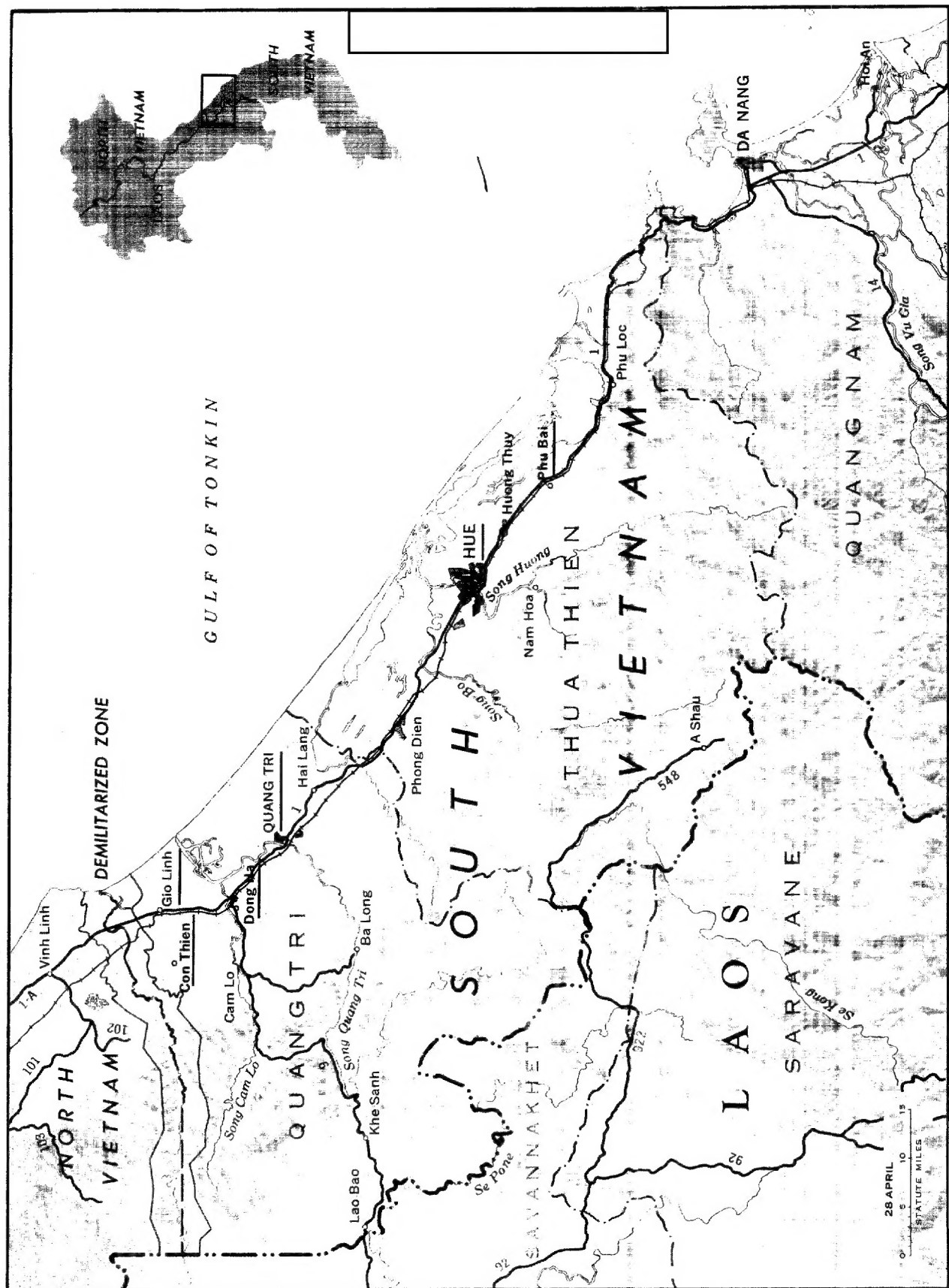
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residents of North Vietnam that they must expect a lowered food consumption level (Paras. 2-3).

VI. Other Major Aspects: Communist truck traffic in the northern Laos panhandle has spurted in the last few days (Paras. 1-2). Food reported in tight supply in rural areas of DRV (Paras. 3-4).

28 April 1967

25X1



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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In one of the heaviest enemy barrages of the war, Communist forces simultaneously attacked at least six allied base areas and positions in northern I Corps on 27-28 April. In a well-coordinated series of attacks, the Communists used rockets, artillery, and mortar fire. A total of 12 Americans were reported killed and nearly 200 others wounded.

2. Among the allied positions hardest hit were those at Dong Ha which were struck by at least 50 140-mm. rockets. Nine Americans were killed and 51 wounded. The two brief but heavy mortar attacks on the US Marine headquarters area at Phu Bai, several miles south of Hue, wounded 67 Americans and damaged 29 US aircraft.

3. The US heavy artillery positions at Gio Linh were subjected to two attacks--a heavy artillery attack, including 105-mm. howitzers, followed shortly thereafter by a mortar barrage. American losses were two killed, 42 wounded, four trucks destroyed, and eight artillery pieces damaged. Other allied positions attacked included the base area at Con Thien and two US Marine field positions in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces.

4. In the past, the Communists have employed artillery sparingly. They have used 75-mm. pack howitzers previously except in the one other 105-mm. attack on Gio Linh in late March 1967, possibly from positions in the DMZ. The Communists in the south are known to have captured a few 105-mm. artillery pieces but not to have used them. Recent attacks suggest that the enemy has strengthened its resources of heavy guns and ammunition, but it is not yet clear whether American-made 105-mm. howitzers have been introduced from North Vietnam into the South. Some howitzers now in the possession of the North Vietnamese may have been captured in the war against the French in the early 1950s or obtained from the Chinese who captured them in the Korean war.

28 April 1967

I-1

25X1

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Viet Cong Plans

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6. [redacted] who recently infiltrated into South Vietnam, discussed future Communist plans in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces with a group of Viet Cong cadre [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] The enemy plans allegedly revolve around two time periods--from mid-April until 19 May (Ho Chi Minh's birthday) and from mid-May to 20 July (the anniversary of the signing of the 1954 Geneva agreements). Available Viet Cong forces are to be supplemented by two NVA divisions presently located in Quang Tri Province. The colonel also alleged that an NVA major general has been assigned to command the Viet Cong armed forces from Da Nang to Quang Tri city.

25X1

7. [redacted] have mentioned similar plans which, among other objectives, called for attacks against Dong Ha and Phu Bai. The attacks reportedly are scheduled to be followed by intensified assaults on allied military positions and important targets in Quang Tri city and Hue in an effort to continue the attrition of US forces and to compel the allies to negotiate according to the stipulations of Hanoi.

25X1

28 April 1967

I-2

25X1

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Some minority labor groups not associated with the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor (CVT) plan to hold a rally and parade on 1 May, international labor day. Bui Luong, president of the Vietnamese Labor Force for United Action and a rival of CVT leaders, has stated that he will hold a parade despite the fact he has been authorized only to have a meeting. Luong claims that his estimated 50,000 marchers will be orderly and will not attack the US or the GVN either verbally or with banners.

Moderate Buddhists

2. A Saigon newspaper on 28 April carried an interview with Thich Tam Chau, the leader of the moderate Buddhists, in which Chau allegedly urged Buddhist followers to run for office in the national elections. Tam Chau was also quoted as stating his satisfaction with the present electoral process and with the prospect of establishing representative governmental institutions. Until now, the moderate faction of the Buddhist Church has been relatively silent concerning the coming elections as well as the performance of the Ky government since the struggle movement was put down last year. The militants, on the other hand, have been relatively active in distributing antigovernment tracts and they are reported to be laying the groundwork behind the scenes, at the behest of Thich Tri Quang, for participation in the elections in support of a civilian candidate who might represent their antigovernment sentiments.

GVN-FULRO Negotiations

3. Another attempt is under way to arrange a meeting on 1 May between the GVN and Y B'ham, the leader of the tribal autonomy movement, FULRO. Y B'ham has sent two more letters from Cambodia to his emissaries in the central highlands requesting the meeting as well as increased security measures. Despite initial reservations, II Corps

28 April 1967

II-1

commander General Vinh Loc has apparently agreed to proceed with arrangements for a meeting although, according to a US Embassy officer, he had recommended to Premier Ky increased restrictions on FULRO activities in the highlands after an abortive attempt to meet with Y B'ham earlier this month. If the negotiations should abort again, the GVN will probably take a considerably dimmer view of the whole FULRO issue in the future.

28 April 1967

II-2

25X1

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Air action resumed in the Hanoi area on 28 April after bad weather on the previous day had caused the only lull in US bombing during the past ten days. The principal raid was directed against the Hanoi railroad repair yard located across the Red River just north of the DRV capital. No bomb damage assessment of the strike is yet available.

2. One of the F-105s participating in this strike was shot down by a MIG-21 as it was leaving the target. No parachute was sighted by the downed pilot's wingmen. Other pilots involved in the railroad repair yard strike, however, reported shooting down two MIG-17s.

25X1

28 April 1967

III-1

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

28 April 1967

IV-1

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. [REDACTED]

that civilian residents of the city, chiefly women and children," were attempting to leave the city in great numbers because of the recent air strikes on targets near the DRV capital. On several occasions following US air strikes near Hanoi and Haiphong last summer, the Hanoi regime attempted to evacuate all nonessential personnel from both cities. These measures probably reduced the populations of the cities by as much as 50 percent, but there have been consistent reports indicating that the people tended to drift back again. Moreover, [REDACTED]

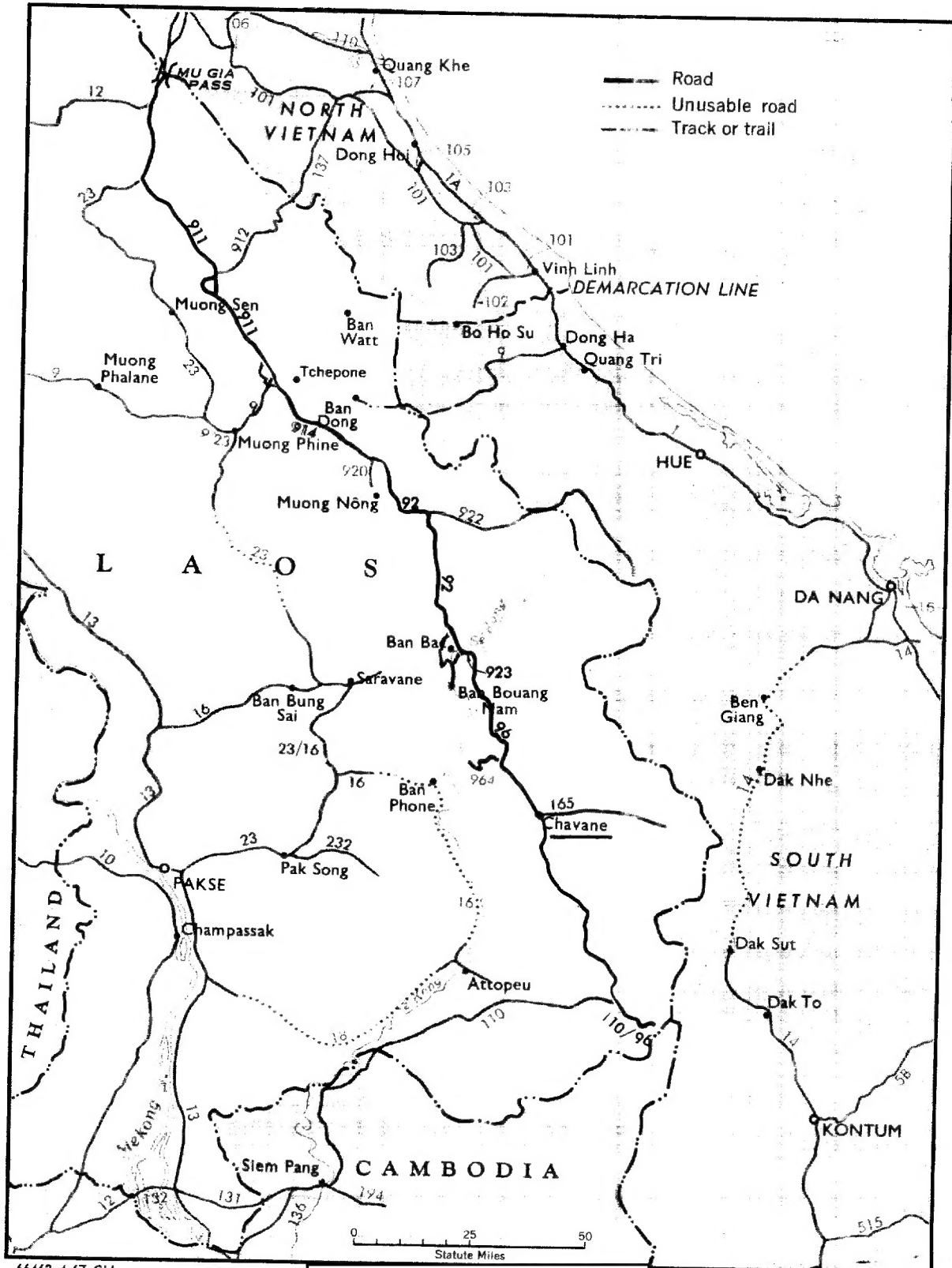
[REDACTED] a feeling of "euphoria" seemed to be gripping the people in Hanoi because of the belief that the capital city offered considerable economic advantages and relative safety from the bombing.

25X1

28 April 1967

V-1

LAOS PANHANDLE



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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. Another spurt of Communist trucking activity has been observed in the northern Laotian panhandle. On the night of 22-23 April approximately 80 trucks were reported moving south in the Mu Gia Pass area. This is the first significant southbound convoy spotted in the pass this month, and is far in excess of the five southbound trucks a day average moved through the pass in the first three weeks of April. It is possible that a Communist effort is under way to move additional supplies into the infiltration corridor in the last weeks of the current dry season. Periodic fluctuation in rates of trucking activity is common, however, apparently as a result of US air attacks and other difficulties.

2. There are indications that heavy rains, which normally hit the panhandle in June, may be early this year. Standing water and deep mud have been seen along parts of Route 23 and Route 911 by ground observers. The Communists have already started to pre-position corduroying materials as well as gravel and straw along roads in the lower panhandle in an attempt to offset the effects of bad weather.

Food Tight in Rural Areas

3. The North Vietnamese press has confirmed that the war and the below-average rice harvest of 1966 have squeezed rural food consumption. Two articles in the December issue of the Hanoi periodical Thoi Su Pho Thong (Current Affairs) told peasants that the food consumption level cannot be expected to be maintained at peacetime levels. State procurement, according to the articles, has recently been "larger than in the past." The peasants are urged to eat less and eat a larger proportion of cereals and other rice substitutes in order to make even more rice available for government procurement in the future. "Excessive" amounts of food in peasant hands are condemned as encouragement to a runaway free market.

28 April 1967

VI-1

4. On the other hand, the articles told cadres to make adequate provision for the genuine needs of the peasants because their energies must be maintained for a prolonged war, and soldiers fighting away from home must be "put at ease about their families." In particular, cadres were admonished against the past habit of overestimating the output possible for each plot of land and, on this basis, setting excessive procurement targets. The cadres were instructed to make their estimates based on "real conditions" and to ignore even "past performance."

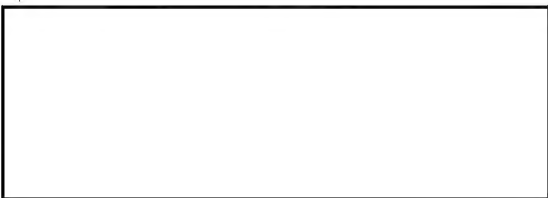
28 April 1967

VI-2

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